



# Town of Westford Massachusetts

## Town Manager's Newsletter

December 2020



**Jodi Ross,**  
Town  
Manager

[jross@westfordma.gov](mailto:jross@westfordma.gov)  
[www.westfordma.gov/tm](http://www.westfordma.gov/tm)

### Important:

Please sign up to receive updates on the latest road construction in town.

[Subscribe to Notifications](#)



**Dog License Renewal Has Begun**  
December 1  
See Page 9

**Sign up for Westford's new Emergency Notification service:**  
[Smart 911](#)

**Happy Holidays!**



Watch Meetings Online



[www.westfordcat.org](http://www.westfordcat.org)

### Dear Westford residents,

On November 13, 2020, the Massachusetts State Legislature enacted House Bill No. 4235, An Act relative to Westford Home Rule Charter. This is in response to Town Meeting's approval to seek a change in our Town Charter, altering the title of Board of Selectmen to Select Board, and making several other "inclusive" language changes. The board and I would like to thank the Westford League of Women Voters, Town Meeting, and everyone else involved for their efforts in updating our Town Charter with this very important language improvement. The full text of the House Bill is available to view at the following link: [House Bill No. 4235](#).

Last week the Commonwealth released its weekly public health report which shows our town has been elevated to RED, reflecting a high-risk for COVID-19 transmission. As we are doing our best to attempt to keep our residents, our town officials and staff safe and healthy, we have temporarily closed some of our town buildings as of Monday, December 14th to the public. The buildings impacted include Town Hall, J.V. Fletcher Library, Water Department, Highway Department, Recreation Department, Cemetery Office, and Cameron Senior Center. Town operations continue uninterrupted as these offices will remain staffed to serve our community. We encourage patrons to contact us via phone and/or email. For important information on COVID-19, including resident services, the latest town department information, CDC guidance, testing sites in Massachusetts, and more, please visit our town's website at [westfordma.gov/COVID-19](http://westfordma.gov/COVID-19).

The board received a request for a waiver of M.G.L. c. 138 §12 All Alcohol Restaurant License 2021 renewal fees from Scott Pelletier, owner of Fuse Bistro. The board, in an effort to assist our local businesses negatively impacted by COVID-19, voted unanimously to waive 50% of the 2021 annual cost for All Alcohol Restaurant, All Alcohol Club, All Alcohol Innholder, and Wine and Malt Only Restaurant licenses with the reduced payment due June 15, 2021.

At the Select Board meeting on November 24<sup>th</sup>, our board voted to adopt a single tax rate and set the tax rate at \$16.64 per thousand. In preparation of certification of our Fiscal Year 2021 Tax Rate, the Massachusetts Department of Revenue requested Westford apply \$475,000 in stabilization funds to balance our FY 2021 operating budget. This is deficit is due to the FY 2020 Actual Recreation Enterprise Revenue shortfall, which impacts our revenue projections for FY 2021. The board voted to approve this request.

Westford Power Options Program (POP) is the new name for our Community Electricity Aggregation program. This program is a town-run program that leverages the buying power of residents and businesses to provide electricity options, stable long term rates and more renewable electricity. Westford POP has been renewed through December 2023 with more renewable electricity and expanded choices. Check out our new product offerings, including a 100% renewable electricity choice, and product rates on the program website [masscea.com/westford](http://masscea.com/westford).

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[WWW.WESTFORDMA.GOV](http://WWW.WESTFORDMA.GOV)

In follow up from our Special Town Meeting Article 24, the disposition of 63 Main Street, the Select Board discussed the sale of the property, the need for additional municipal parking, and the impact on the value of the property from reducing its parcel size. Recently the board voted to divide the property as outlined on the map prepared by our Engineering Department, with a portion of the parcel to be reserved for the town's future parking use, however the number of parking spaces needed was not determined. The parcel abutting Main Street will be sold as a single-family residence, with a historic preservation restriction, through a request for proposal process. The map prepared by our Engineering Department is available at the following link: [63 Main Street Lot Line and Parking Concept](#). Town staff are working on a survey and complying with all town permitting obligations.

At the board's most recent meeting, they met jointly with the Energy Committee to discuss the Special Town Meeting resolution of Article 14, to promote clean energy and reduce fossil fuel use to achieve the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' limit of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, and determine the Committee's capability to take on this initiative. The board continued this discussion to their meeting on January 26, 2021 where they will consider renaming the Energy Committee, expanding the membership, and updating changes to their charge.

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee has met three times since it was established and since has appointed Eric Barber-Mingo and Mamatha Jagannathan as Co-Chairs, Medha Palnati as Chair-In-Training, Corinne Badenhoff and Anjali Rajput as Secretaries, and Derek Lo as Secretary-In-Training. The Committee will be reporting to the Select Board and School Committee on the progress of its work by January 26, 2021. The committee also recently received a generous donation of \$2,500 from Lowell 5 Bank to help with their efforts!

The board approved the June 12, 2021 Annual Town Meeting Timeline and the 2021 Select Board meeting schedule. Click the following links to view these documents: [2021 Annual Town Meeting Timeline](#) and [2021 Select Board Meeting Schedule](#).

I would like to remind town residents and visitors of the Winter Parking Ban in accordance with c. 199 §23 of the Westford Town Code, there is no on-street parking longer than one hour between 1:00 AM and 8:00 AM from November 1<sup>st</sup> to April 1<sup>st</sup>. There is to be no on-street parking of any kind during a snowstorm or following a storm while cleanup is taking place. The Highway Department's heavy equipment operators and I greatly appreciate your efforts in keeping your property safe, and allowing our drivers to more easily be able to maneuver our large sanders and plows down our narrow roads.

Our Police Chief, Tom McEnaney, just announced his retirement effective January 23, 2021. Tom has been on our Police Department for over 30 years, our Chief for the past 13. He is leaving very big shoes to fill. Tom will be honored at our January 12<sup>th</sup> Select Board meeting. Congratulations also to Carol Gumbart, our Conversation Resource Planner, who is retiring this month. I extend my best wishes to Carol and her family for a long, healthy, happy retirement.

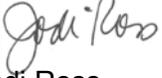
Please join me in welcoming our new Public Safety Telecommunicator, Samantha Murnane.

There are several openings on our local boards and committees, including: 12 North Main Street Task Force, 35 Town Farm Road Task Force, Affordable Housing Committee, Agricultural Commission, Board of Assessors, Commission on Disability, Communications Advisory Committee, Cultural Council, Dog Park Task Force, Election Officer, Energy Committee, Historical Commission, Nashoba Valley Technical High School District Committee, Parkerville Schoolhouse Committee, Parks, Grounds and Recreation Commission, Pedestrian Safety Committee, Westford Scholarship and Grant Committee, and Zoning Board of Appeals. I urge you to peruse our website for information about the work of these committees; and if you have interest, please complete a Citizen's Activity form at this link: [Citizen Activity Form](#).

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Would you like more detailed information on the Board of Selectmen's meetings? Click the following links to access: [Board of Selectmen Documents](#) & [Board of Selectmen Meeting Videos](#).

My best wishes to each of you for a safe holiday season, filled with love, compassion, good health, and hopefully a bit of cheer. Onward and upward to 2021!

Sincerely,  
  
Jodi Ross  
Town Manager



*A special thanks to our Fire and Police Departments for spreading holiday cheer through our town on Sunday.*



## December at the J.V. Fletcher Library

Our programs are generously funded by the Friends of the J.V. Fletcher Library, Inc.



**Library Community Survey:** To plan for the next three years, the J. V. Fletcher Library is evaluating its services and programs. Please help us by completing this [survey](#)!

**Holiday Hours:** The Library will offer Curbside Service on Thu., Dec. 24 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. We will be closed on Fri. Dec. 25 and Sat., Dec. 26. The Library will be open for Curbside Service, and Browsing Tent Appointments on Thu., Dec. 31 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. We will be closed on Fri., Jan. 1. We will reopen for Curbside Service and Browsing Tent appointments on Sat., Jan. 2 at 10 a.m.

**New! Kids craft bundles:** Sign up for a craft bundle that includes a book checked out to you and a complete craft kit. We let you know the skill level required, each craft is not exclusively for one age group. Look for a Captain Underpants themed craft bundle coming in January! Sign up for a craft bundle through our [Events Calendar](#).

**New Build a Bag for Kids and Teens:** Do you miss browsing your favorite section of the library? Let us do the browsing for you! Fill out the [Build-A-Bag Bag request form](#) – one for each child – and get a special selection of library materials, chosen just for you! We select a variety of titles based on what you tell us on the [form](#). Then we check it all out to you, fill the bag, and let you know your bag is ready. Pick up your bag during our [curbside hours](#). **Look for a similar service for adults called “Grab and Go” coming soon!**

**New! Expanded Saturday Hours for “Book the Browsing Tent”:** Are you looking for new titles for you and/or your family? Do you miss browsing the stacks of the Library? Look for the form on our website and submit it to schedule a time to come and browse the selections personally picked for you by our staff. The [form](#) will inquire about your reading tastes or you can simply have us “surprise you” with some staff recommendations. We also offer “Book Bundles” for children and adults. Choose a category and we will supply with a “bundle” of books. One of our Library staff will meet you in the tent with personally curated titles just for you! Check the website for the form, submit it, and then a staff member will reach out to schedule your appointed time. Fifteen minute appointments will be available for individuals and thirty minute appointments for families. To comply with Covid-19 safety re-opening guidelines, only one individual or one family will be scheduled at a time in the tent. **This service is available Monday – Saturday from 10-4.** We can't wait to see you under the tent! Per Governor Baker, masks are required.

**Holiday Pies with Liz Barbour: Thu., Dec. 17 at 7:00 pm.** A delicious holiday pie is one pie crust and one filling away! Liz Barbour of The Creative Feast will share her favorite pie dough recipe so students can recreate the perfect, flaky crust every time. Learn her favorite pie baking tools, ingredients, preparation methods, and how to prepare a delicious seasonal pie and folded tart. Email [sregan@westfordma.gov](mailto:sregan@westfordma.gov) for the Zoom invitation.

**Teen and Tween Trivia with the Trivia Brothers: Mon., Dec. 28 at 1:00 p.m.** Are you a true Generation Z pop culture master of information? The Trivia Brothers are bringing it to the library and it doesn't even matter if you are away for the holidays - zoom in from where ever you are. This free program is hosted remotely by Challenge Trivia and is generously funded by the Friends of the J.V. Fletcher Library. [Register here](#) and be sure to read the program guidelines included in the registration to participate.

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## December at the J.V. Fletcher Library (Continued)

**Disney Family Trivia with the Trivia Brothers: Wed., Dec. 30 at 1:00 p.m.** Just how much of a Disney fan are you and your family? Dress up as your favorite character and think about a team name. It doesn't even matter if you are away for the holidays - zoom in from where ever you are. This free program is hosted remotely by Challenge Trivia and is generously funded by KDK Foundation in honor of Kurt Kelly. [Register Here](#) and be sure to read the program guidelines included in the registration to participate.

**Monday Mystery, Adult Non Fiction, Thursday Night Book Club:** All of our adult book clubs continue to meet virtually. Please visit [westfordlibrary.org/events/adult-book-clubs/](http://westfordlibrary.org/events/adult-book-clubs/) for more information and upcoming meeting dates.

**Virtual Westford Job Seekers:** The J. V. Fletcher Library's "Westford Job Seekers Network" meets weekly on Wednesdays from 3- 4:30pm. Attracting people of diverse work backgrounds and age groups, this group helps you expand your network of business contacts, discover new job opportunities and connect with others who are in job transition and can become part of your support group. Meetings include guest speakers who are experts in the job search process or in career development. Contact Dina Kanabar, [dkanabar@westfordma.gov](mailto:dkanabar@westfordma.gov) for more information.

**Youth Services Book Club Online Registration: Mon., January 11 at 6:30 p.m.** Online registration for all of our school age book clubs starts Monday evening at 6:30 p.m. We have individual book clubs for Kindergarten, First Grade, Second Grade, Third Grade, Fourth & Fifth Grade (combined), Non-fiction for grades 3 and 4 (combined), and just for this spring only – Pop Up Art Club for kids in grades 3 to 5 (combined). Book clubs meet once a month at 4 p.m. Please visit our website ([www.westfordlibrary.org](http://www.westfordlibrary.org)) and the calendar of events for dates and times and to sign up. This program is for Friends and non-resident Friends of the J.V. Fletcher Library.

**Live Virtual Children's Concert with the Rockabye Beats: Wed., Jan. 13 at 10:00 a.m.** Get a little crazy with the Rockabye Beats; Marcos and Shon deliver hands on learning through music, bouncing, and all kinds of shenanigans. While the program is entirely in English, they sprinkle in some Spanish vocabulary to harmonize with catchy Latin island beats. They will inspire your *niños* (and you!) to sing, dance, and move. We think this live virtual program is good for all ages but the little ones will really love it. We will send a zoom link to all registrations. This program is made possible by COVID funding secured by Senator Edward J. Kennedy, First Middlesex District.

**Curbside During Covid:** Please place your selections on hold through the online catalog. You will be notified when your order is ready and you may come any time during our pick up hours. Inter-library delivery is now available, please expect longer delays than usual. Items received from other libraries will be quarantined for one week. Curbside Pickup is available Monday-Saturday from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and Monday – Thursday 6:30-8:30 p.m. Please do not come until you receive a notification that your order is ready. When you arrive, please call 978-399-2300 (due to heavy call usage, we have updated the number to one that rings at multiple desks) and a masked staff member will place your order under the rear portico. Please wear a mask to pick up your items. **If you have questions or need assistance placing your holds, please call us at 978-399-2300 or send us an email at [westfordlibrary@westfordma.gov](mailto:westfordlibrary@westfordma.gov).**

### CLICK! CALL! CHAT! CONNECT!

- **CLICK** on ebooks, audiobooks, music, streaming video, and more at [www.westfordlibrary.org](http://www.westfordlibrary.org)
- **CALL** us at 978-399-2300
- **CHAT** with Reference at 978-399-2304
- **CONNECT** with us on [FACEBOOK](#), [TWITTER](#) and [INSTAGRAM](#)



## Cameron Senior Center

*The Cameron wishes you Happy Holidays and we look forward to sharing these programs and services with you!*

### Let's Ring in The New Year Together

Wednesday, December 30<sup>th</sup> at 12P.M.

Join us for a New Year's Eve **to-go lunch!** Donna Dutton will be preparing her 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual ham, potatoes and famous broccoli salad for us as we finish the last days of 2020 and start a new year. Cost - \$5 RSVP-978-692-5523

### Sand Buckets Available!

We are fortunate to have a sand delivery program with the police. If you need a free bucket of sand to be delivered to your home for the coming winter months, please call 978-692-5523.

### SNAP – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

SNAP provides a monthly benefit to buy nutritious foods. The average household benefit for 2 is \$215./month. To receive a SNAP benefit, you must meet income guidelines. A household of 1's gross income level is \$25, 520 and a household of 2 is \$34,480. If you would like to see if you qualify please contact Annette or Alison by calling 978-692-5523.

### Westford Covid-19 Relief Fund

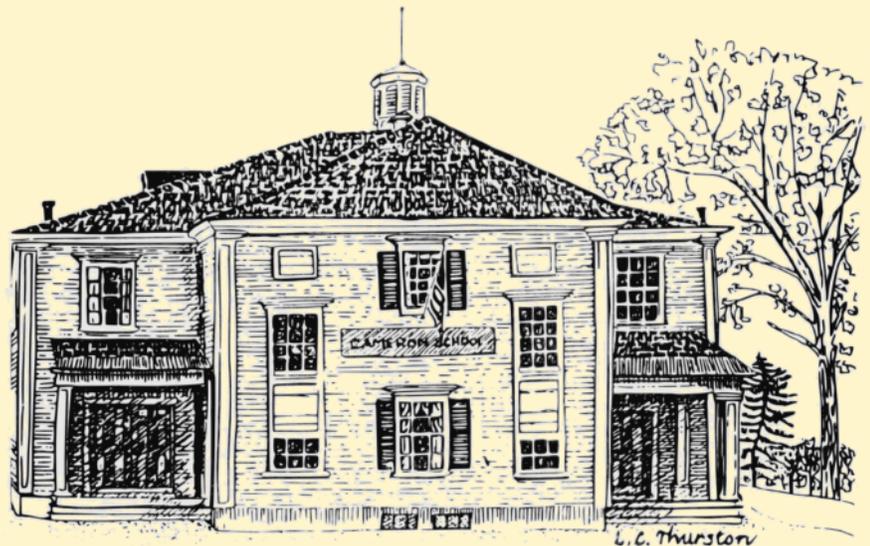
The goal of the Covid-19 Relief Fund is to provide financial assistance to Westford residents who have experienced financial hardship related to the Covid-19 pandemic. This may be as a result of job loss, decreased working hours and income, or increase in expenses. The assistance that the Fund provides is available as a result of donations from members of the community and is administered through the Westford Council on Aging. Awards are based upon level of demonstrated need and the available balance in the fund at time of application. If you'd like to apply, contact Alison at 978-399-2325. If you'd like to donate, you can do so on the Westford COA website or by check to Cameron Senior Center and note Covid-19 Relief in the Memo line.

### In Much Appreciation!

Many of you have been creatively using your time at home. A big thank you to **Joyce Cederberg** for donating 500 crocheted "scrubbies" and to Dionne Bell for her donation of 30 knitted wool slippers. Your thoughtfulness has brought smiles to many.



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Westford Senior Center

## Cameron Senior Center (continued)

### Scout Troop 159 with leader Derek Anderson

A big shout out of thanks to our many volunteer groups that cleaned up 20 yards for our seniors this fall. **Troops 195, 159, Pack 96, Girl Scouts, National Honor Society students, United Methodist Church and St. Catherine's Confirmation classes.** Your service is greatly appreciated!

### Friendly Phone Calls:

The pandemic has created social challenges for many leading to isolation, loneliness. If you would like to hear a friendly voice, I can connect you with a volunteer who would be available to talk with you daily or whatever your preference may be. Please reach out to Annette at 978-399-2326 if you would enjoy this friendly check-in time.



*Fall Clean-up! Troops, Packs, and Class members help out.*

### Property Tax Relief – Are you eligible?

The town of Westford has several property tax exemptions for residents: the low income, widows, over 70, blind, disabled, veterans and more. You may be eligible for a tax break and if you are interested in learning more about your options call Annette to review them at 978-399-2326.

### Book Club: Join us from the comfort of your home!

Tuesday at 1:00: January 19th & February 16th

The pandemic has led us to be creative with offering book club ... from parking lot meetings, to indoors spaced 6 feet apart, to virtual online. January and February will be offered virtually to enhance your safety. Call me and we will send you the invite to join.

January's read will be *Saturday Evening Girls Club* by Jane Healey and February will be *Night of Rain & Stars* by Maeve Binchy. I will order books through the town library and can deliver them to your home.

Other ways to obtain books are through Barnes & Noble, Amazon or online at Merrimack Valley Library Consortium "Overdrive". <https://mvlc.overdrive.com> The Overdrive website also has an app called Libby to search and take out books on your Ipad, phone, kindle. Hoopla is another online option. Happy Reading! Annette 978-399-2326

**Inclement weather policy-** Please remember that the Cameron follows the same inclement weather procedures as Town Hall. To find updated inclement weather information please go to <https://westfordma.gov> or simply call the center after 6:30AM to receive delay/closure information.

**For more information about more Cameron offerings and services please visit [www.westfordma.gov](http://www.westfordma.gov), <https://www.facebook.com/CameronSeniorCenter/> or simply call 978-692-5523.**

## **Westford Health Department**

### **Mental Health Resources for Westford Residents**

The COMPASS Helpline is open during our regular hours – Monday through Friday, 9 am – 5 pm. You can reach us by calling 617-704-6264 or 1-800-370-9085, or emailing us at [compass@namimass.org](mailto:compass@namimass.org).

COMPASS is the information and referral helpline at NAMI Massachusetts. They provide resources and support to help people navigate the complex mental health system in difficult circumstances.

#### ***Massachusetts Dept of Mental Health***

<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-department-of-mental-health>

**Crisis number 24-hour line:** (877) 382-1609

**Main number:** (617) 626-8000 M-F 9-5

**Voicemail Box:** 1-800-221-0053 (checked regularly calls returned within 48 hrs.)

#### ***Interface Referral Service-*** <https://interface.williamjames.edu>

**Referral Helpline:** 888-244-6843

Monday – Friday 8am-5pm

#### ***Veterans Crisis Line***

1-800-273-8255 (Press 1)

#### ***Massachusetts Substance Abuse Hotline***

1-800-327-5050

#### ***Crisis Hotline for Domestic Abuse*** [24-hour line](#)

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/domestic-violence-programs-for-survivors>

877-785-2020

877-521-2601 (TTY)

**Samaritans Hotline:** (800) 273-8255

**National Domestic Violence Hotline 24-hour line:** 1-800-799-7233

**National Sexual Abuse Hotline 24-hour line:** 1-800-656-4673

#### ***CDC stress and coping during COVID-19:***

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

#### ***Suicide Prevention during COVID-19:***

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/current-events/supporting-your-emotional-well-being-during-the-covid-19-outbreak/>

**Town Clerk's Corner**



He's not  
going to think  
of it himself.

Sit. Stay. License.

## **2021 DOG LICENSING BEGINS**

**DECEMBER 1, 2020**

\$15 for Spayed/Neutered

\$20 for Non-altered

(Must have current rabies certificate)

## Recycling Commission

### ELECTRONICS & MORE COLLECTION

Saturday, November 14, 2020, at the Westford Highway Garage was a great success!

Thanks to the innovative changes to the traffic flow by Chip Barrett and his team as well as the cooperation of the vendor, Northeast Materials Handling in adding a third collection line the flow worked perfectly and our residents had a positive experience. In addition, all Recycling Commission Vendors and volunteers donated significant time to this event which made it very enjoyable for all.



*Kristina Greene answering questions at the event.*

We also appreciate the solid input we received from the Town Manager and other staff as well as from the Westford Police.

Even though this event closely followed the last event in September, the following was collected:

- Light Iron:** 11,500lbs,
- Electronics:** 16,101lbs  
(Including:) 158 TV's, 55 Monitors, 46 Speakers, 6 Car Seats, 5 Vacuum Cleaners and 5 Fluorescent Household bulbs
- Co Mingled Material:** 1,017lbs



*Volunteer Ellen Harde greeting and directing residents.*

'Tis the season for holiday cards and gift giving! When it's time to dispose of these items, please put them in the correct bin. As you'll see below, most traditional gift packaging is not currently recyclable in Massachusetts. If you want to reduce the amount of trash generated from the holidays, please consider reusable gift bags and gift boxes, festive fabric, or your own creative approach.

#### Currently recyclable in Massachusetts:

- Gift bags that are 100% paper and have no other foil/plastic/glitter. Please remove the string handles first.
- Holiday cards and envelopes that are 100% paper (with no metallic inks, foil, wire, plastic decorations, or glitter)

#### Currently NOT recyclable in Massachusetts (Put in TRASH):

- Gift wrap and tissue paper
- Ribbons, bows, and string
- Holiday cards that have glitter, foil, metallic inks, plastic decorations, or other "mixed media"
- Envelopes with foil or other non-paper decorations (if you can remove the foiled/ decorated part, you can then recycle the pure paper part of the envelope)

**The pandemic has changed our lives in so many ways – but despite it all, please continue your good recycling habits. Return, re-use, and donate!**



## Eviction Diversion Initiative: Free Legal Services

Through the COVID-19 Eviction Legal Help Project (CELHP), there is a substantial expansion of free legal help for low-income tenants as well as low-income owner-occupants of 2-3 family properties navigating the eviction process. These services can be used **before** the eviction process begins, as well as once a notice has been received, and can be used in coordination with community mediation services (<https://www.resolutionma.org/>). For the legal services income eligibility is capped at 200% of federal poverty level. Legal services will be available in every region and can be found on a new website built for this initiative: <https://evictionlegalhelp.org/>. Households can also call 2-1-1, and learn more at the Department of Housing and Community Development's website, [www.mass.gov/CovidHousingHelp](http://www.mass.gov/CovidHousingHelp).

**Please post and share information about expanded legal services with your organization's members and community.** Resources such as a new video in English and Spanish, social media posts and new flyers in seven languages can be found here [website](#).

**Legal help is available right now for income-eligible tenants facing eviction.** We strongly encourage tenants and landlords to learn about legal help as well as community mediation resources. Eligible tenants and landlords should seek help as soon as possible, before a court filing occurs.

Set your radio presets to Westford's Local  
Emergency Management Radio **AM 1630**  
For Emergency Information



## Town News Subscription Manager



### Notify Me®

The town's website can notify subscribers of new items.

Please visit [www.westfordma.gov/list.aspx](http://www.westfordma.gov/list.aspx) and follow the simple instructions to sign up for the various feeds available. You will receive email from us to confirm each thing you sign up for, and you need to click the link in each of those emails before it will start working. This confirmation process provided security ensuring that only you can change your notification settings.

While visiting the website consider setting up a profile account. This allows you to gather feeds from the website into a custom portal and as we implement some of the new features of the site you will be able to save data and track the progress of your interactions with the town.